



Criminal court statistics quarterly, England and Wales, October to December 2020

Including statistics on the use of language interpreter and translation services in courts and tribunals

Main points

<p>COVID-19 and associated actions impacted on most criminal court measures</p>	<p>The recovery at the criminal courts continued following the initial impacts of the COVID-19 response. Most measures in this bulletin have been impacted by the COVID-19 response and the latest figures represent a reflection of the pandemic response impact rather than a continuation of trends.</p>
<p>Magistrates' court: continued increase in disposals</p>	<p>↑ Receipts remained stable, while disposals continued to rise – up 8% on the previous quarter. Outstanding cases fell by 7% on the previous quarter but remain above pre-COVID levels.</p>
<p>Crown Court: continued increase in outstanding cases</p>	<p>↑ Receipts into the Crown Court remained above pre-COVID levels, while disposals remained below pre-COVID levels. Outstanding cases continued to rise, up 49% compared with the previous year.</p>
<p>Crown Court: increase in average age of outstanding cases</p>	<p>↑ The median age of an outstanding for in Q4 2020 was 125 days - this has increased by 39% on the previous year. Around 18% of cases have been outstanding for a year or more, up from 6% in the previous year.</p>
<p>Trial listings increased and vacations fell at Crown Court</p>	<p>↑ In Q4 2020 there were 3,373 trials listed, a marked increase from 113 trials in Q2 2020 but well below Q4 2019 (5,167). Trial vacations fell but remained above pre-COVID levels.</p>
<p>Timeliness at magistrates' court increased</p>	<p>↑ The time from offence to completion at the magistrates' court increased by 25% on the previous year. The increase can be seen across all stages both 'pre-court' and 'at court'.</p>
<p>Timeliness at the Crown Court decreased</p>	<p>↓ At the Crown Court for all cases from the time of receipt to completion fell by 7%. Where a not guilty plea was entered, timeliness increased by 41% from 229 days in Q4 2019 to 323 days in Q4 2020.</p>

The technical guide to 'Criminal court statistics' and 'Language interpreter and translation services in courts and tribunals' can be found at the links below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-guide-to-criminal-court-statistics>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/guide-to-language-interpreter-and-translation-services-statistics>

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Statistician's comment

“This report covers the period to the end of December 2020 and shows the continued impact of COVID-19 on criminal courts.

Following the limited operation of the criminal courts¹ and the gradual reintroduction of jury trials² during the report period, the figures published today show the continued recovery in the system. This can be more clearly seen at the magistrates' courts, where disposals remained above receipts and the outstanding caseload has consistently fallen.

Some of the magistrates' court disposals will feed directly through to the Crown Court, where receipts have maintained higher levels seen in Q3 2020. Disposals have increased but at a slower rate than receipts, as a result the outstanding caseload has continued to rise.

We are publishing experimental analysis on the nature of the outstanding caseload for the first time. This shows that the age of outstanding cases has increased sharply due to the COVID-19 pandemic response and the proportion of cases which have been outstanding for more than a year has increased markedly.

The trends at both magistrates' courts and the Crown Court continue beyond the National Statistics series into more recent management information published by Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) – which are highlighted in this document.”

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hmcts-weekly-operational-summary-on-courts-and-tribunals-during-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

² <https://www.judiciary.uk/announcements/jury-trial-sites-4/>

1. Changes to note

COVID-19 and future publications

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused MoJ to have to change its data gathering, access and release practices, focusing efforts on priority analysis and statistics. [Our statement](#) explains this further. Of particular note, we temporarily paused access to the Police National Computer earlier this year, to minimise non-essential travel by our analysts.

As a result, and in line with guidance from the Office for Statistics Regulation, the decision has been made to delay the publication of all linked end-to-end criminal court timeliness data in this publication. Separate ('unlinked') timeliness estimates for cases completing at the magistrates' courts and Crown Courts respectively have been included in this release.

Common Platform and reform to criminal court data³

The 'Common Platform' is a new digital case management system for the magistrates' and Crown Courts. The system seeks to streamline data collection, data accessibility and improve the way criminal cases are processed across the Criminal Justice System. It will eventually replace the existing 'legacy' criminal court systems Libra (magistrates') and XHIBIT (Crown), with a single, streamlined system.

Early adopter courts across England and Wales will test the system before the subsequent rollout to all criminal courts. Derbyshire magistrates' and Crown Court began this process in September 2020.

- Data for the magistrates' court caseload *does* include both 'legacy' and Common Platform data for Derbyshire as new cases enter the new system.
- Crown Court measures and all timeliness data *do not* include any Common Platform data. The omitted data represents a small number of cases and does not impact any published trends in the current release.

Work is ongoing with HMCTS and partner agencies to better understand the implications this system change has for the published National Statistics series and their underlying methodologies. We are committed to ensuring that published statistics remain accurate, robust and coherent for users during the operational transition of data systems at the criminal courts.

Data developments

- **Outstanding caseload at the Crown Court**
To address interest in the outstanding case estimates at the Crown Court this release includes 'experimental statistics' providing estimates of the average length of time that a case has been outstanding (days) broken down by case type and remand status. We have worked with partners in HMCTS analytical, operational and policy teams to develop additional measures to provide more insight into the outstanding caseload. The series is published as 'experimental statistics' as we continue to develop the measures.
- **Magistrates' caseload data tool**
Following the improvement of underlying data quality as a result of the Common Platform data reforms inconsistencies in the way that Automatic Tracked Case Management (ATCM) cases were previously assigned to court locations have been corrected. The improved data has allowed us to revise the back series and provide a consistent, coherent picture of magistrates' courts workload.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/common-platform-system-tested-in-criminal-courts>

- **Timeliness estimates for 2020**

As highlighted above, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has not been possible to produce linked end-to-end criminal court timeliness estimates for 2020. Data to the end of December 2019 remains the latest available estimates of end-to-end timeliness.

Provisional data using a new data linking methodology has been produced to provide a consistent back series for linked end-to-end timeliness for cases completing at the Crown Court (T4). The linked data continues to be available to the end of 2019 only.

We have sought to best meet user demands and have included separate ('unlinked') timeliness estimates for magistrates' courts and Crown Court.

- *Magistrates' court timeliness estimates (T1 – T3)* are unaffected and these tables are updated to show the time spent from offence to completion at the magistrates' courts.
- *Crown Court timeliness estimates (E1 – E2)* are not directly comparable with the established linked timeliness series – they provide estimates of the time spent at the Crown Court only.

We will continue to develop the new linked end-to-end timeliness and will keep users informed. We remain committed both to the wellbeing and safety of our staff, and to providing the best and most accurate information we can, serving the public good at a time when it is needed the most.

For further information regarding the extent and impacts of the data developments detailed here please see the [Guide to criminal court statistics](#).

Failure to appear warrants

This is the sixth publication of a new series on Failure to Appear (FTA) warrants issued in magistrates' courts. These are published as [experimental statistics](#), developed alongside colleagues in Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) in response to user demand and will be subject to further development, in line with users' views.

Supporting guidance and further information relating to the FTA collection can be found at the link below: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-court-statistics>

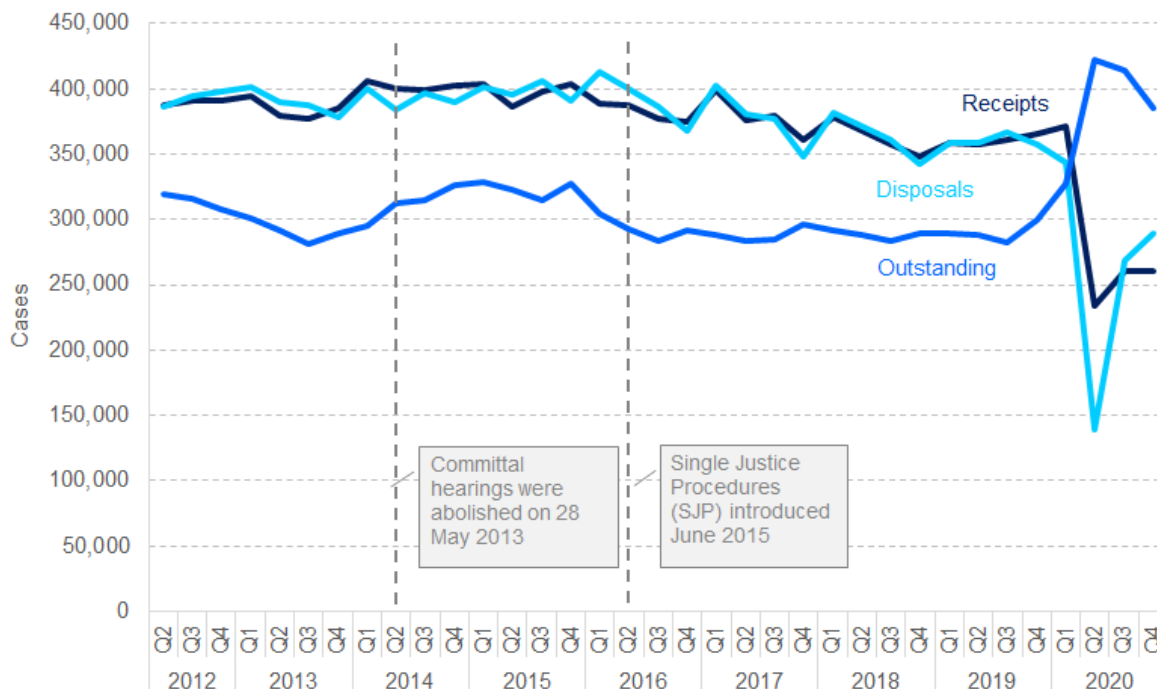
Feedback continues to be sought regarding the experimental FTA statistics and can be directed to: HMCTS_Analysis_and@Justice.gov.uk

2. Criminal cases in the magistrates' courts

Criminal case disposals at the magistrates' courts rose, while outstanding cases continued to fall – but remain above pre-COVID levels.

Receipts remained stable, while disposals continued to rise 8% on the previous quarter. Outstanding cases fell by 7% on the previous quarter as operational capacity increased but levels remain 31% higher than the previous year.

Figure 1: Magistrates' courts caseload, Q2 2012 – Q4 2020 (Source: Table M1)



Magistrates' court caseload

Receipts and disposals have tended to rise from series lows in Q2 2020 after the phased reopening of courts⁴. However, levels remain well below that seen in the previous year following the review of court arrangements on the 23rd March 2020⁵.

- Receipts in the magistrates' courts were unchanged on the previous quarter but remain 29% lower than the previous year. The fall over the year can be seen mostly in summary non-motoring (down 52%) and summary motoring cases (down 22%).
- The volume of cases disposed of continued to increase, up 8% on the previous quarter. This is largely due to a 13% increase in the volume of summary motoring cases being disposed of in the latest quarter. Overall disposals remain 19% below levels seen in Q4 2019.

There were 385,613 outstanding cases at the magistrates' court in Q4 2020, this represents a 7% fall on the previous quarter (414,294) and an 8% fall on the series peak in Q2 2020 (422,385). The quarterly fall was seen across all case types.

The levels of outstanding cases in Q4 2020 represent an increase of 28% compared to the previous year (300,229 in Q4 2019).

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/more-face-to-face-hearings-as-courts-reopen>

⁵ <https://www.judiciary.uk/announcements/review-of-court-arrangements-due-to-covid-19-message-from-the-lord-chief-justice/>

The latest published [HMCTS management information](#) provides weekly volumes of receipts, disposals and outstanding cases for all cases types at the magistrates' courts (e.g. including civil and enforcement in addition to criminal cases).

Data to the week ending 21st February 2021 shows that weekly receipts and disposals remain below pre-COVID baselines (down 33% and 36% respectively). However, both have increased since mid-April 2020, with disposals tending to be above receipts since the beginning of August. As such outstanding case volumes have continued to fall from a peak of 525,059 at the end of July to 479,489 at the week ending 21st February 2021 – remaining 18% higher than a pre-COVID baseline of 407,129.

Trial efficiency

The total number of trials in magistrates' courts has sharply increased after reaching historical lows in Q2 2020.

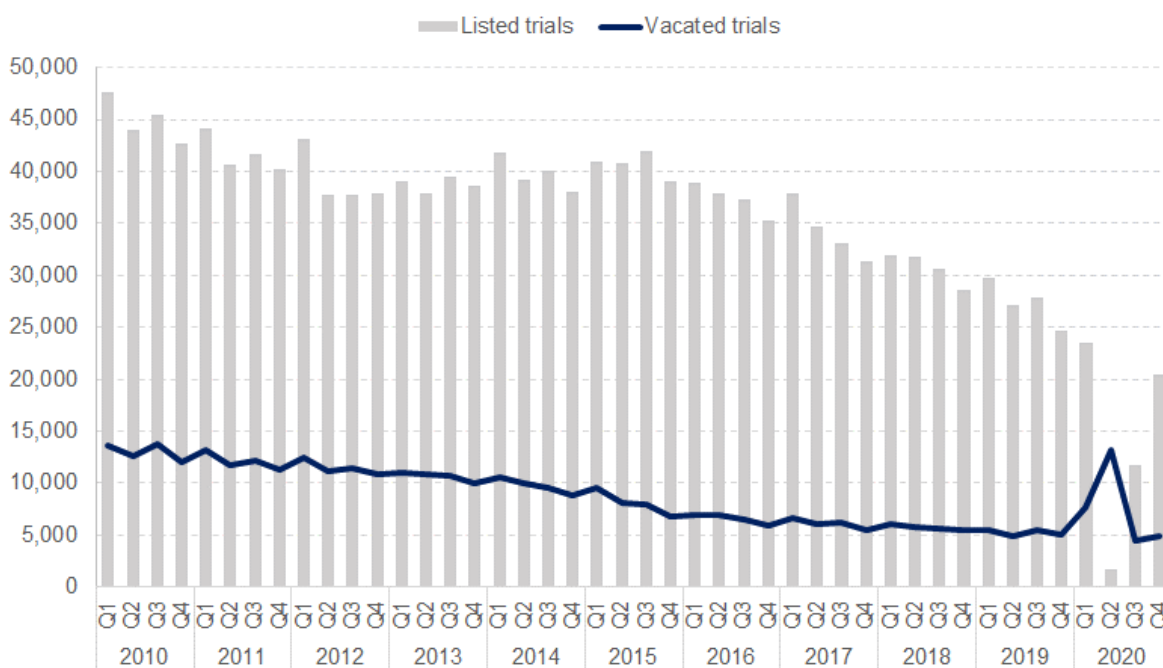
There were 20,426 trials listed for Q4 2020, a 74% increase on the previous quarter (11,732). Despite the continued increase, the trial listed volumes remain below levels seen in the previous year, down 17% on Q4 2019 (24,657).

- Of trials listed for Q4 2020, the proportion that were ineffective continued to increase, up 5 percentage points compared to previous quarter (from 19% to 24% in Q4 2020) and a corresponding decrease can be seen in the effective trail rate (from 44% to 41% in Q4 2020).

Vacated trials are trials which have been removed from the listing before the date of the trial, they are counted in the period the vacation happened rather than the date when they were due to be listed (e.g. as for effective, cracked and ineffective estimates).

There were 4,936 trial vacations in Q4 2020, this increased by 11% on the previous quarter (4,465 in Q3 2020) but has fallen from a peak seen in Q2 2020 (13,208).

Figure 2: Magistrates' courts listed trials and vacated trials, Q1 2010 – Q4 2020
(Source: Table M2)

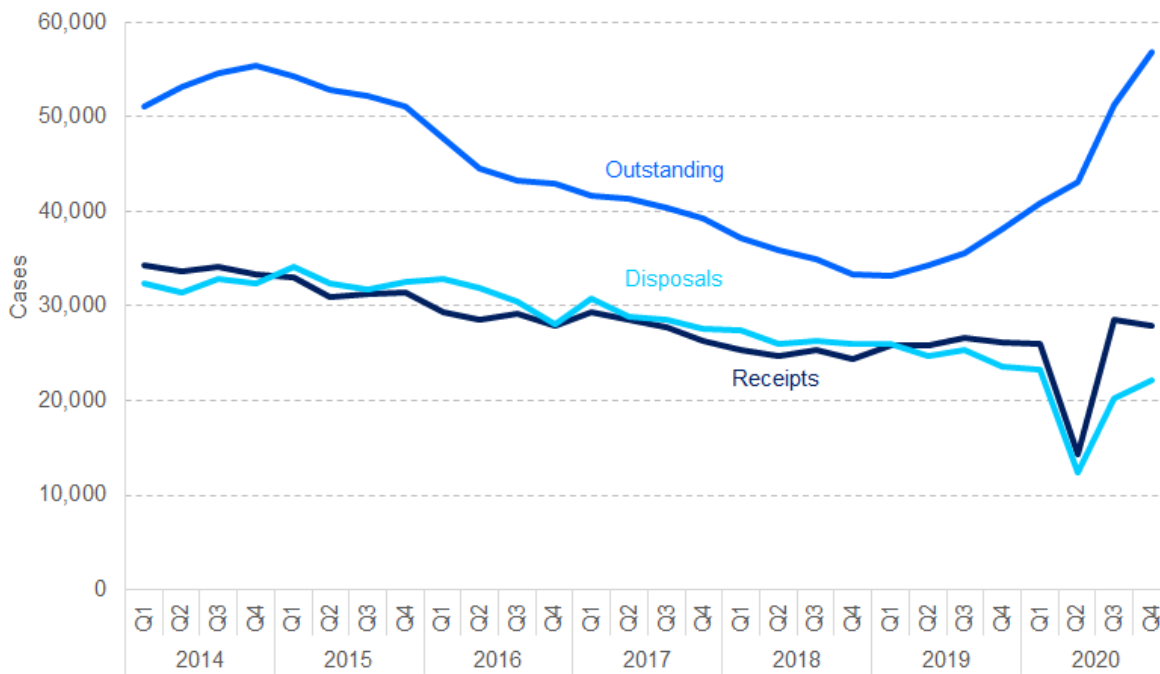


3. Criminal cases in the Crown Court

The volume of outstanding cases at the Crown Court continued to rise

In Q4 2020 receipts to the Crown Court have remained above pre-COVID levels, while disposals remained below pre-COVID levels. As a result, the volume of outstanding cases increased by 49% compared to the previous year and 11% on the previous quarter.

Figure 3: Crown Court caseload, Q1 2014 – Q4 2020 (Source: Table C1)



Crown Court caseload

The increased throughput from the magistrates' courts following the ongoing recovery from COVID-19 response impacts has resulted in higher volumes of receipts at the Crown Court. Similarly, the phased reintroduction of jury trials⁶ mean the operational capacity of the court estate has increased and subsequently disposals at the Crown Court have risen.

- There were 27,959 case receipts into the Crown Court in Q4 2020. This represents a slight fall on the previous quarter (2%), but volumes remained 7% higher than the previous year. 'For trial' case receipts are well above pre-COVID levels (up 15% on the previous year), while both sentence and appeal case receipts fell (down 1% and 23% respectively). 'For trial' cases relate to the case type at the point of receipt into the Crown Court - we know that most of these cases will result in the entry of a guilty plea and that only a small proportion will require a trial.
- There were 22,196 case disposals at the Crown Court in Q4 2020. Case disposals continued to increase from a series low in Q2 2020, up 9% on the previous quarter. Despite the quarterly increase case disposals remain 6% lower than the previous year.

At the end of Q4 2020 there were 56,827 outstanding cases at the Crown Court, an increase of 49% on Q4 2019 (38,212 cases). This is the highest level of outstanding cases seen across the series (since 2014) and continues increases seen since Q1 2019.

⁶ <https://www.judiciary.uk/announcements/jury-trial-sites-4/>

- The increase can be seen in 'for trial' and sentenced cases, which increased by 57% and 29% respectively compared to Q4 2019. Outstanding appeals against magistrates' decisions were unchanged over the same period.
- The increase in 'for trial' outstanding cases compared with the previous year can be seen across all offence groups to varying degrees. The largest proportional increases on the previous year were seen for drug offences (up 73%) and sexual offences (71%).

The latest published [HMCTS management information](#) provides weekly volumes of receipts, disposals and outstanding cases for all cases types at the Crown Court.

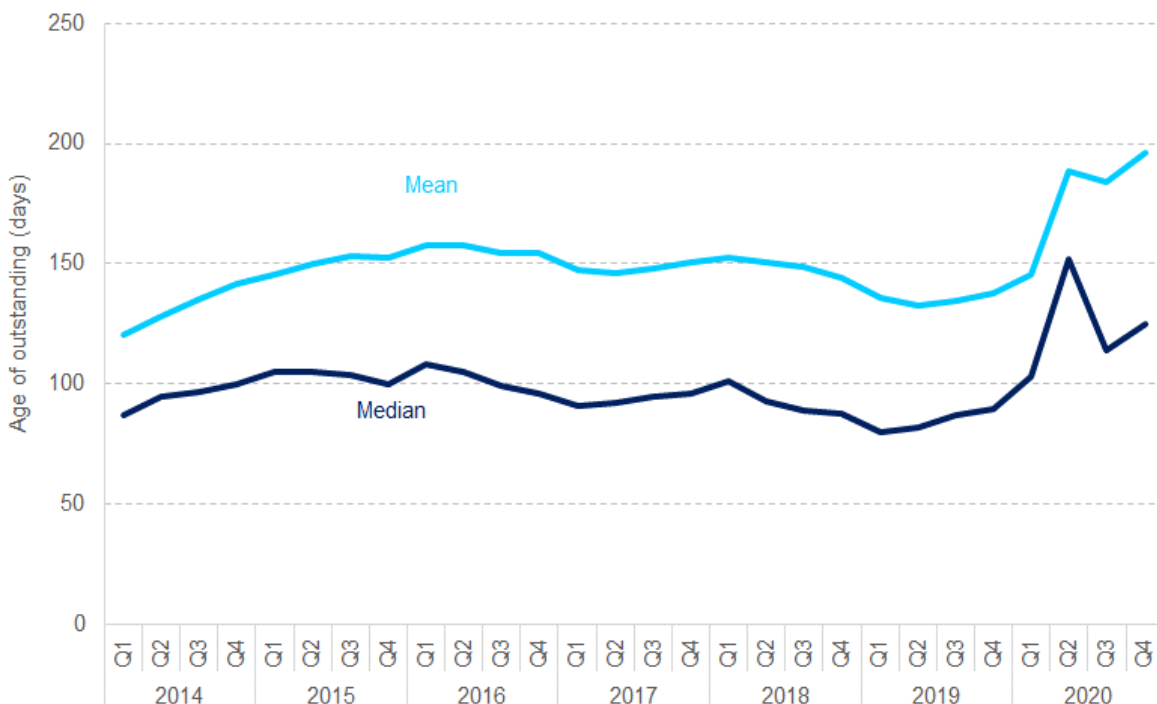
The data to the week ending 21st February 2021 shows that weekly receipts and disposals settled back to around pre-COVID levels. Receipts have tended to remain well above disposals, causing outstanding case volumes to continue to rise. The latest outstanding caseload estimate is 45% higher than a pre-COVID baseline.

Experimental analysis of the outstanding caseload at the Crown Court

To address additional interest in the outstanding case estimates at the Crown Court this release includes 'experimental statistics' providing estimates of the average length of time (days) that a case has been outstanding. This is broken down by case type and remand status.

The age of an outstanding case is calculated from the point of receipt into the Crown Court and the latest outstanding date, e.g. as at the end of December 2020.

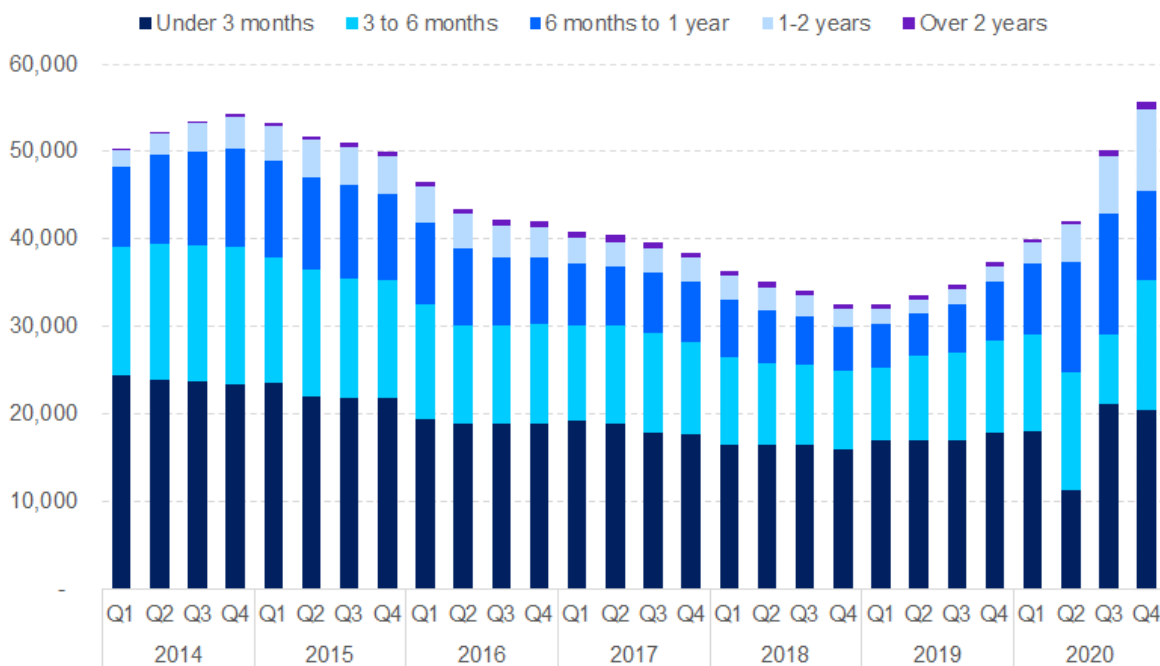
Figure 4: Age of outstanding cases at the Crown Court, Q1 2014 – Q4 2020 (Source: Table O1)



- The average age of an outstanding case has increased sharply during the COVID-19 pandemic period. In Q4 2020 the median (125 days) and mean (196 days) estimates for all cases have increased on the previous year, up 39% and 42% respectively.

- In Q4 2020, the majority (68%) of 'for trial' outstanding cases are remanded on bail, while around a third (31%) are remanded in custody. These proportions have remained broadly similar across the series since 2014. 'For trial' cases relate to the case type at the point of receipt into the Crown Court - we know that most of these cases will result in the entry of a guilty plea and that only a small proportion will require a trial.
- The age of outstanding 'for trial' cases has increased for both bail and custody cases, however larger proportional increases can be seen for custody cases. In Q4 2020, the median (134 days) and mean (179 days) estimates increasing 58% (from 85 days) and 51% (from 119 days) respectively on the previous year.
- The proportion of cases which have been outstanding for a year or more has increased sharply in 2020 – from 6% in Q4 2019 to 18% in Q4 2020.

Figure 5: Volume of outstanding cases at the Crown Court by grouped age, Q1 2014 – Q4 2020 (Source: Table O3)



Trial efficiency

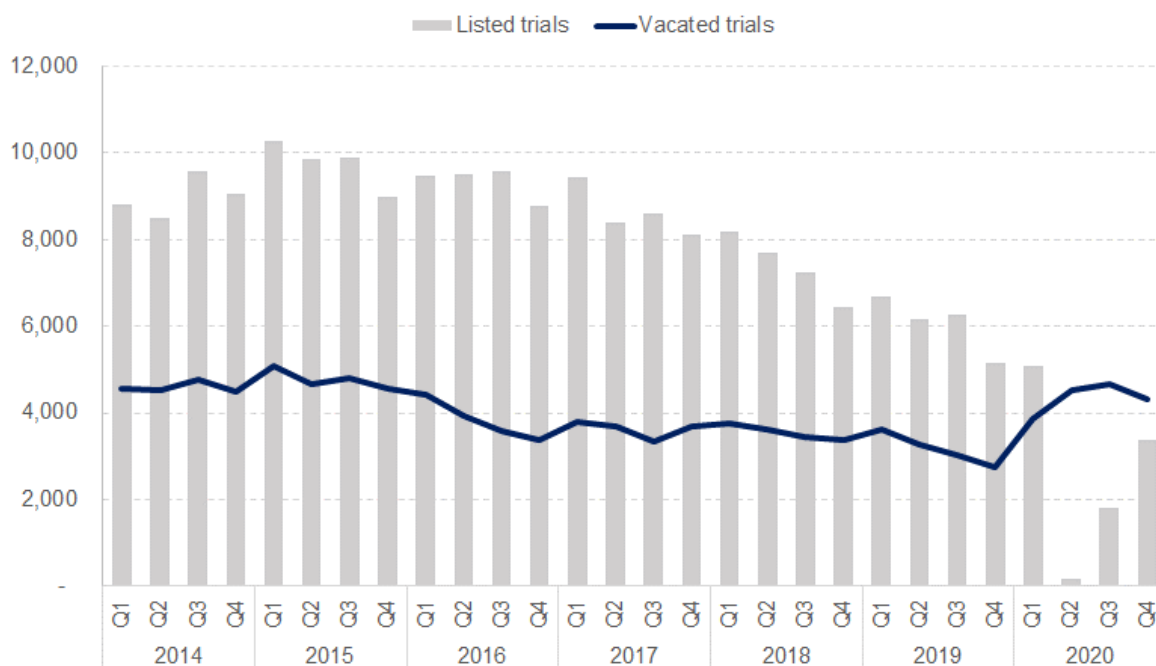
The volume of trials at the Crown Court has tended to fall since 2015, from around 39,000 trials listed to 24,000 in 2019. There were 3,373 trials listed for Q4 2020, an 85% increase on the previous quarter. However, the volume of trials listed remains over a third (35%) below pre-COVID levels (5,167 trials in Q4 2019).

Both effective and ineffective trial rates are above pre-COVID levels, while a corresponding fall in the proportion of cracked trials can be seen (from 33% in Q4 2019 to 25% in Q4 2020).

Vacated trials are trials which have been removed from the listing before the date of the trial. They are counted in the period the vacation happened rather than the date when they were due to be listed (e.g. as for effective, cracked and ineffective estimates).

There were 4,319 vacated trials in Q4 2020, down 7% on the previous quarter but this remains above pre-COVID levels (up 58% on Q4 2019).

Figure 6: Crown Court listed trials and vacated trials, Q1 2014 – Q4 2020 (Source: Table C2)



Guilty plea rate

For defendants dealt with in ‘for trial’ cases at the Crown Court in Q4 2020, just under three-quarters (74%) entered a guilty plea⁷. This remains a little higher than pre-COVID but represents a slight fall back from a series peak across Q2 and Q3 2020 (79%). The increase in the guilty plea rate reflects the restricted ability of courts to progress jury trials (i.e. cases where a not guilty plea is entered).

In Q4 2020, only 12% of all defendants dealt with at the Crown Court pleaded not guilty. This represents a fall on Q4 2019 (20%), with a higher proportion of defendants dealt with entering a guilty plea following the suspension of jury trials and subsequent impacts of the COVID-19 response.

Average waiting time at the Crown Court

The median waiting time⁸ for defendants dealt with at the Crown Court was 6.6 weeks in Q4 2020. This represents an increase from 5.4 weeks in Q4 2019 but continues falls since Q2 2020 (7.3 weeks).

Median waiting times in ‘for trial’ cases where a not guilty plea was entered continued to rise, up from 25.0 weeks in Q4 2019 to 34.9 weeks in Q4 2020. The proportion of defendants dealt with following a not guilty plea remains below pre-COVID levels.

Average hearing time at the Crown Court

The median hearing time⁹ of ‘for trial’ cases where a not guilty plea was entered, has increased to 13.0 hours in Q4 2020, up 9% on Q4 2019 (11.9 hours) and 4% on the previous quarter (12.4 hours). This is down on the series peak seen in Q2 2020 (15.0 hours), but volumes of not guilty plea cases being dealt with remain well below pre-COVID levels, down 39% from 2,704 in Q4 2019 to 1,647 in Q4 2020.

⁷ Guilty plea rate is the number of defendants pleading guilty to all counts as a proportion of those with a plea.

⁸ The waiting time is the duration between a case being sent to the Crown Court and the first main hearing.

⁹ The hearing time is the time a case spends being heard in the Crown Court, including preliminary hearings, main hearings, and hearings where a sentence is given to a defendant.

4. Timeliness

Timeliness at the magistrates' courts increased, with cases spending longer 'at court'

The time from offence to completion at the magistrates' court increased by 20%, from 168 days in Q4 2019 to 202 days in Q4 2020. At the Crown Court, the time from receipt to completion for all cases fell by 7%, from 99 days in Q4 2019 to 92 days in Q4 2020.

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Provisional data using a new data linking methodology has been produced to provide a consistent back series for linked end-to-end timeliness for cases completing at the Crown Court (T4). The linked data continues to be available to the end of 2019 only.

We have sought to best meet user demands and have included separate ('unlinked') timeliness estimates for magistrates' courts and Crown Court.

- *Magistrates' court timeliness estimates (T1 – T3)* are unaffected and these tables are updated to show the time spent from offence to completion at the magistrates' courts.
- *Crown Court timeliness estimates (E1 – E2)* are not directly comparable with the established linked timeliness series – they provide estimates of the time spent at the Crown Court only.

We will continue to develop the new linked end-to-end timeliness and will keep users informed. We remain committed both to the wellbeing and safety of our staff, and to providing the best and most accurate information we can, serving the public good at a time when it is needed the most.

Magistrates' courts timeliness

Timeliness at the magistrates' courts measures the time from an offence being committed through key stages of the criminal justice system including charge, first listing at the magistrates' court and subsequent completion at court.

The median duration from offence to completion of defendants dealt with at the magistrates' courts (excluding those sent to Crown Court) has increased by 20%, from 168 days in Q4 2019 to 202 days in Q4 2020, a series high.

Increases in overall median timeliness can be seen across all case types to varying degrees, with marked increases seen for defendants in indictable (53%) and triable-either-way cases (104%).

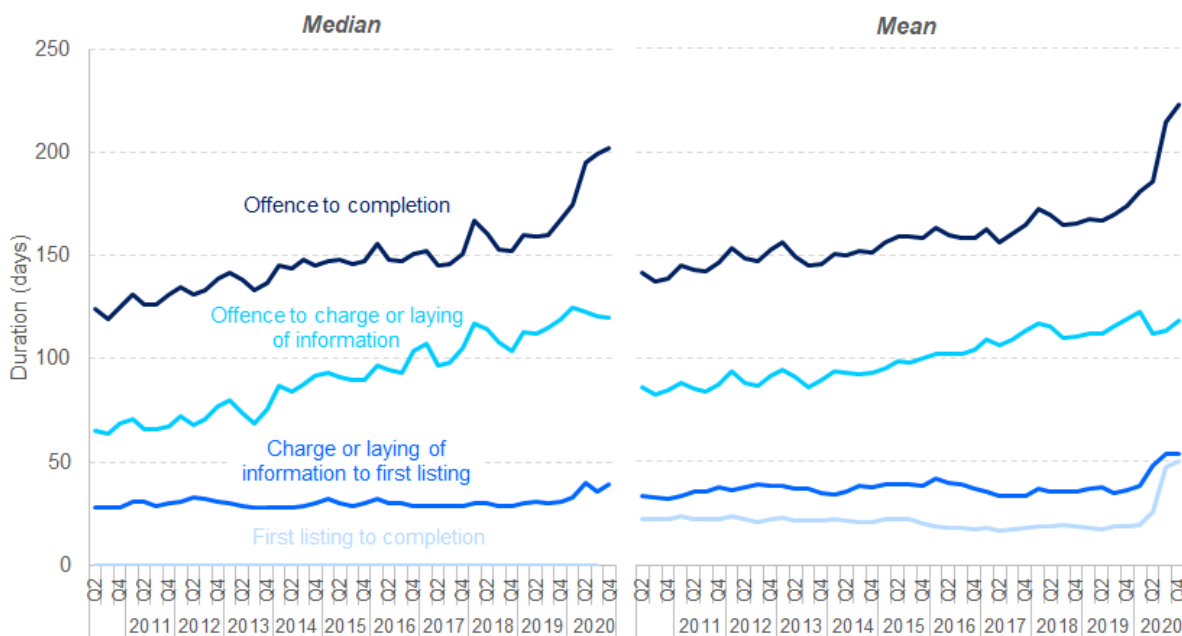
The increases can be seen across all timeliness stages both 'pre-court' and 'at court'.

- 'Pre-court' time continued to increase. The duration from 'offence to charge' remained stable after increases broadly seen since 2010, up 1% on the previous year (from 119 to 120 days). The median time from 'charge to first listing' increased, up 26% on the previous year (from 31 to 39 days).
- 'At court' median durations remain stable at 0 (e.g. first listing and completion occur on the same day), due to the proportion of summary cases completing. However,

the overall mean for all cases has more than doubled (172%) from 18 days in Q4 2019 to 50 days in Q4 2020 – a series peak.

Similarly, defendants completing at the magistrates' courts required more hearings on average to reach an outcome in Q4 2020 compared to the previous year, up by 38% (from 1.4 to 2.0 in Q3 2020). Relatedly, the percentage of defendants who completed at first listing has fallen sharply, down 18 percentage points to 56%.

Figure 7: Average number of days from offence to completion for cases completing at the magistrates' courts only by stage, Q2 2010 – Q4 2020 (Source: Table T3)



Crown Court timeliness - experimental statistics

Timeliness at the Crown Court is measured from the point of a case entering a Crown Court, reaching a main hearing and then completion at court. This data series remains in development and as such it is considered 'experimental statistics'. Data presented here is not produced on the same basis as previously published linked end-to-end timeliness data which are available to Q4 2019 (see Tables T4).

The median duration from case entry to completion for defendants dealt with at the Crown Court fell by 7% on the previous year, down from 99 days in Q4 2019 to 92 days in Q4 2020.

Increases can be seen in the time from receipt to main hearing for all cases, up 12% from 42 days in Q4 2019 to 47 days in Q4 2020. Whereas the median time from main hearing to completion fell, down from 10 days in Q4 2019 to 9 days in Q4 2020.

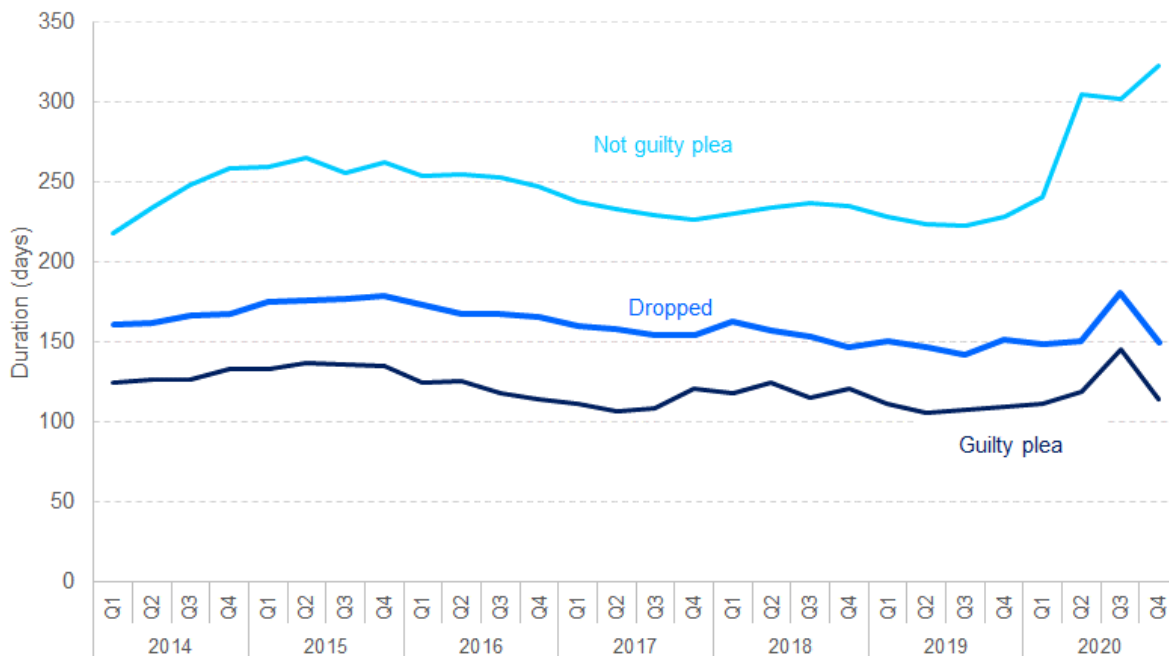
The annual decrease in overall median timeliness at the Crown Court can be seen in 'for trial' cases (down 7%), whereas overall timeliness for sentence cases increased (up 27%).

Changes to the makeup of 'for trial' cases completing at the Crown Court following the COVID-19 pandemic response has impacted the timeliness estimates. In Q4 2020, only 12% of all defendants dealt with at the Crown Court entered a not guilty plea, this represents a fall on Q4 2019 (20%). Since Q2 2020 a higher proportion of defendants dealt with have entered a guilty plea following the suspension of jury trials.

- In 'for trial' cases where a guilty plea was entered, the median duration from receipt to completion at the Crown Court increased by 5% from 109 days in Q4 2019 to 114 days in Q4 2020. Increases can be seen in the time from both receipt to main hearing (up 28%) and from main hearing to completion (up 18%).

- In 'for trial' cases where a not guilty plea was entered, the median duration from receipt to completion at the Crown Court increased by 41% from 228 days in Q4 2019 to 323 days in Q4 2020. This is due to increases in the time from receipt to main hearing (up 40% from 178 to 249 days) whereas the time from main hearing to completion fell (down 25% from 28 days to 21 days).

Figure 8 – Median duration from receipt to completion in 'for trial' cases by plea at the Crown Court, Q1 2014 – Q4 2020 (Source: E2)

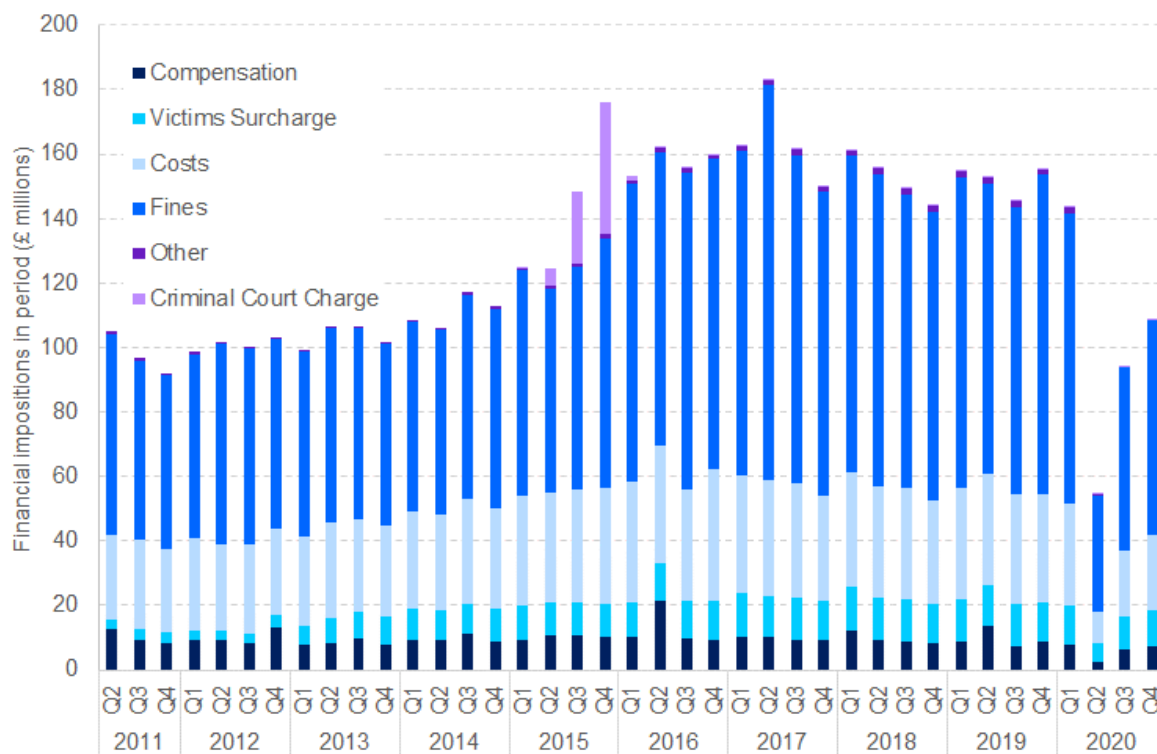


5. Enforcement of financial impositions

Total financial impositions continued to increase from series lows in Q2 2020, but remain well below pre-COVID levels.

Total financial impositions in Q4 2020 rose to £108m from £54m in Q2 2020 but remain 30% lower than Q4 2019. The total value of outstanding financial impositions remained at around £1.22 billion in Q4 2020 – stable over the last year.

Figure 9: HMCTS management information: Financial impositions by imposition type, England and Wales, Q2 2011 – Q4 2020 (Source: Table A2)



Financial impositions and amounts paid by imposition type

Following the continued impacts of the COVID-19 response the overall value of impositions fell by around £46.7m on Q4 2019, with falls against all imposition types. The majority of this is largely due to decreases in fines, where the value of fines imposed fell by £32.7m, down 33% compared with Q4 2019.

Outstanding financial impositions

In Q4 2020, the total value of financial impositions outstanding in England and Wales was £1.22 billion, up 1% on Q4 2019.

The amount of outstanding financial impositions has doubled since the start of 2015 (£571m). A change in policy regarding the collection of financial impositions is partially behind this cumulative increase – unpaid accounts are no longer routinely closed and therefore, more outstanding impositions are carried over from previous periods.

6. Experimental Statistics - language interpreter and translation services

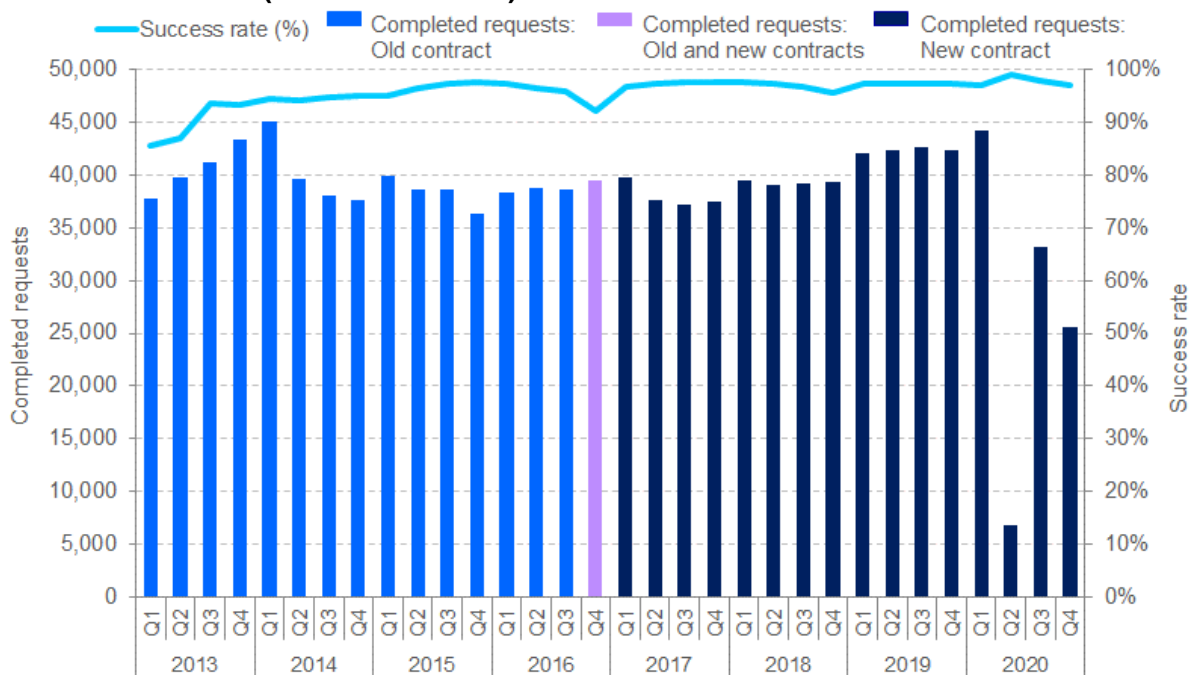
The number of completed language service requests fell back on the previous quarter and the success rate remained stable.

There were 25,580 completed requests in Q4 2020, down 23% on the previous quarter. The success rate for requests in Q4 2020 was 97%, stable with the previous year.

Completed service requests

There were 25,580 completed requests in Q4 2020, down 23% on the previous quarter (33,143) and remaining below volumes from the previous year (42,436).

Figure 10: Number of completed language service requests and overall success rate, Q1 2013 – Q4 2020 (Source: Table L1)



Success rate

The overall success rate of requests was 97% in Q4 2020, similar to rates seen since 2017. The increases in cancellations seen in Q2 2020 (34%) have fallen back closer to pre-COVID proportions (20% in Q4 2020).

Complaints and complaint rate

Unlike completed service requests, the number of complaints has remained very low since Q2 2020, with only 112 complaints made in Q4 2020. This represents a 75% decrease on volumes of complaints seen in Q4 2019 (456) and the overall complaint rate has remained well below 1%.

'Off-contract' requests

The number of 'off-contract' requests in Q4 2020 continued to increase on a series low seen in Q2 2020, with 489 requests. Levels remains 29% below those seen in Q4 2019 (684).

The reduction in overall volumes of language service requests and complaints, as a consequence of the restrictions on court activity imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic response make it difficult to draw any firm conclusions regarding the observed trends.

7. Further information on criminal courts data

The latest data presented in this publication are provisional. Final data for each calendar year is published in June, following further data cleaning and the incorporation of additional cases not available in our original extracts.

Accompanying files

As well as the bulletin, the following products are published as part of this release:

- Two technical guides providing background information and standalone quality guide.
- A set of overview tables, covering each section of this bulletin.
- Pivot tools and underlying data which feature further breakdowns of published data.

National Statistics status

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value. This bulletin recently underwent a compliance check with the Office for Statistics Regulation and retained its National Statistics status in January 2019.¹⁰ All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm which considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate. It is the Ministry of Justice's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected for National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

Experimental Statistics status

Experimental statistics are produced under the remit of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are also produced impartially and are free from political influence¹¹.



Future publications

Our statisticians regularly review the content of publications. Development of new and improved statistical outputs is usually dependent on reallocating existing resources. As part of our continual review and prioritisation, we welcome user feedback on existing outputs including content, breadth, frequency and methodology. Please send any comments you have on this publication including suggestions for further developments or reductions in content to the contacts listed below.

Contact

Press enquiries should be directed to the Ministry of Justice press office:

Tel: 020 3334 3536 Email: newsdesk@justice.gov.uk

Other enquiries and feedback about these statistics should be directed to the Justice Statistics Analytical Services division of the Ministry of Justice:

Damon Wingfield, Head of Criminal Justice System Statistics, Ministry of Justice, 10 South Colonnade, London, E14 4PU Email: statistics.enquiries@justice.gov.uk

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URL: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-court-statistics>

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¹⁰ <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/compliance-check-on-court-statistics/>

¹¹ <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/monitoring-and-assessment/code-of-practice/>